

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

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Down Under

The Philippine Overseas Labor Office is encouraging prospective skilled Filipino workers in the CNMI and around the world to consider an opportunity to work in the Land Down Under.

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Overworked?

A day before the launch of the new sineserye (movie-based soap opera) "Bituing Walang Ningning," teen singing champ Sarah Geronimo checked herself into a hospital.

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\$35M OK'd for Marcos victims

AP



IT'S OFFICIALLY SUMMER
A group of children enjoy their inflatable pool on the side of the street Friday, May 5, 2006 in Manila. With the summer temperature reaching 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 Fahrenheit) people resort to different ways to cool themselves off.

By DAVID KRAVETS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Thousands of Filipinos can share \$35 million (€27.8 million) in a New York brokerage account that belonged to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, a federal appeals court said.

The Philippine government claimed the money belonged to its treasury, but the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said Thursday it had no legal right to the account, which Marcos

opened in 1972 with a \$2 million deposit.

The ruling was part of a 10-year financial battle for 9,500 Filipinos, most of them living in the Philippines, who sought compensation from the dictator's regime to settle human rights abuses.

The plaintiffs filed a class-action suit against the Marcos estate in 1986, the year he was deposed as president after ruling for 20 years. Marcos and his family fled to Hawaii, where he

\$35M Page 2

LITO LUMBANA

Heroic deeds not new to him

By FERDIE PONCE DE LA TORRE
REPORTER

For Lito Lumbana, a cook, it was just an "extension" to the call of duty. He never dreamed of getting recognition for saving a boy from drowning. In fact, it was his third time to play hero.

Lumbana, 37, of Easy Kitchen Restaurant in Garapan, was among three men who were awarded by the Department of Public Safety for their heroic deed when they rescued two boys from drowning at Micro

HEROIC
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Lito Lumbana carries his sons Li and Eli as he shows the certificate of appreciation awarded him by the Department of Public Safety for saving a boy from drowning at Micro Beach.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Manila plays world cultural capital

MANILA—All cultural roads lead to Manila this May as the Philippines plays 'cultural capital' of the world when it hosts the 31st International Theater Institute-United Nations Edu-

cational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ITI-UNESCO) Intercultural World Congress and Theater Olympics of the Nations.

This development was an-

nounced by Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, executive director of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the Philippines' cultural agency. Alvarez is also president of ITI Philip-

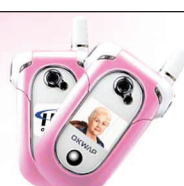
pines.

"This will be a defining moment," said Alvarez, "not only for the Philippines but also for the global community of art-

MANILA Page 2



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PINOYNEWS

4 stages to be a presidential awardee

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**
REPORTER

Filipinos in the Commonwealth are being invited to nominate overseas Filipino workers for the 2006 Presidential Awards.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, in a ceremony, will confer the Presidential Awards on distinguished Filipino individuals and organizations overseas during the observance of the "Month of Overseas Filipinos."

This year there will be four awards to be given to outstanding migrant workers across the globe: the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award, Banaag Award, Kaanib ng Bayan Award and the Pamana ng Pilipino Award.

There will be four stages that nominees will have to go through to get the award this year.

The first stage of the selection process will be the review, validation and recommendations from the Philippine embassies and consulates across the globe. The Awards Committees shall review and summarize all nominations, verify compliance with all the required documentations, request for additional documents and endorse nomination documents to the Technical Committee.

Next would be the evaluation and short-listing of nominations. The Technical Committee shall evaluate all nomination documents and prepare a short-list of

nominees based on the agreed rating scheme. The committee will endorse the short list to the Executive Committee.

Endorsement of the short-list of nominees to the President of the Philippines is the third step. The Executive Committee will review and evaluate the short-listed nominees as submitted by the Technical Committee. After the review and evaluation, the committee then either endorses the short-listed nominees or makes its recommendations before endorsing the same to the Office of the President.

The fourth and last stage will be the final selection and approval of the President of the Philippines. The Presi-

dent approves the final list of awardees.

The criteria for the selection this year are specific for each award. Some of the criteria for all the awards generally include outstanding or significant services or contributions to benefit the Filipino people or nation. The nominees must have shown success, impact or effectiveness in the contribution, which could be in the form of personal or professional service, financial or material contribution, or technology that has proven to be beneficial.

The nominees must have shown dedication and commitment to work or profession or activities to contribute to progress and development in

the Philippines.

If the contributions cited as bases for their nominations are specifically required to be among their official functions and duties, they are not eligible for nomination for this year's awards.

Former awardees, either in the same or other categories, are also not allowed to participate anymore.

Any individual or organization, whether Filipino or foreign, based in the Philippines or overseas, may submit nominations for the awards. Nominations must be made on the prescribed form and submitted together with supporting documents.

A duly completed nomination

form must contain the following information: personal data, a summary of the relevant contributions made by the nominee, completed endorsement form to be completed by the Post's Awards Committee, constitution and by-laws and organizational logo or seal and excellent photographs in black and white.

The deadline for filing for nominations is on or before May 15. Failure to submit the required documents attached to the forms could cause the disqualification of the nominee from the awards.

For specific details on the criteria and other information visit the Philippine Overseas Labor Office at the Nauru Bldg. in Susupe.

MANILA

FROM PAGE 1

ists and cultural workers. We shall witness in the next few weeks the commitment of the world's top theater performers to use their creativity and talents for the cause of fighting global illiteracy and malnutrition, poverty and injustice. It definitely puts the Philippines at the cultural crossroad of mobilizing the world's creative resources to articulate the UN Millennium Development Goals, and work for their attainment. It affirms our bid to become the capital of culture."

The 31st UNESCO ITI World Congress will be held in Manila from May 16-29 this year, which includes the UN Celebration of Cultural Diversity and Development Week and the Philippines' Heritage Month. This year's theme is "Ancestral Roots to New Artistic Routes of Expression: Mobilizing Cultural Diversity to Achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals."

The Millennium Development Goals are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained

in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The eight goals are:

- to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- achieve universal primary education;
- promote gender equality and empower women;
- reduce child mortality;
- improve maternal health;
- combat HIV/AIDS; malaria and other diseases;
- ensure environmental sustainability; and
- develop a global partnership for development.

\$35M

FROM PAGE 1

died in exile in 1989.

In 1995, using a two-century-old U.S. law, a Honolulu jury awarded the group \$2 billion after finding Marcos responsible for summary executions, disappearances and torture.

So far, none of the award has been distributed because

it has been tied up by foreign banks and the Philippine government claiming ownership. The original award is nearing \$4 billion (€3.2 billion) with interest.

Last year, the San Francisco-based 9th Circuit appeals court, which covers Hawaii and eight other western states, ruled that the 9,500 plaintiffs have no right to recover \$683 million (€542.4 million) in

Marcos assets that were transferred from a Swiss account to the Philippine government, which claimed ownership of the money.

The plaintiffs also are pursuing other avenues to collect the judgment.

They are trying to seize \$22 million (€17.5 million) in Marcos assets located in a bank in Singapore, and other properties in various countries.

HEROIC

FROM PAGE 1

Beach on March 18, 2006.

Unknown to many of his friends, it was Lumbana's third time to save a person from drowning. The first was when he was a grade schooler back home; the second time was at Laulau Beach in 1993.

When the Micro Beach incident happened, many wondered how a cook had the requisite skill to apply CPR on the boy, who was then fighting for his life.

Lumbana, though, is not a mere cook. He is actually a certified first aid provider as he used to work as a seaman-cook. For nine years, he had traveled to many countries as such and the job required him to learn how to apply CPR.

He recalled that March 18 was a beautiful morning at Micro Beach. He was with his three-year-old son Li at the beachside near Hyatt Hotel for a walk.

The morning's calm was suddenly shattered when Lumbana heard shouting and saw two men running and jumping into the water. The two men—Ronald Chisato and Ono Harumitsu—grabbed two boys from the water.

Harumitsu immediately applied CPR on the youngest boy while still in the water. Lumbana told his son to stay behind as he waded into the water to help Chisato, who was then carrying

the second boy to shore.

Lumbana placed the boy on the sand where he placed him sideways so he could vomit the water. Lumbana then immediately applied CPR. Moments later, the boy started coughing and spat out the water.

"I was so happy because I knew the boy will be fine," he said.

The two victims regained their breathing, just in time as medics then arrived and transported them to the Commonwealth Health Center.

Witnesses said the two victims were with their other minor brother, mother and grandmother at the Hyatt Hotel beachside.

Two days after the Saipan Tribune came out with the story about the rescue, then DPS Commissioner Ernest Mark Williams and Boating Safety Unit chief Sgt. Juan Diaz visited the shop of Windsurfing Saipan Inc. located at Hyatt Beach, where the officials handed certificates of appreciation to Chisato and Harumitsu.

The following morning, Williams and DPS spokesman Ken Concepcion proceeded to Easy Kitchen to hand the certificate of appreciation to Lumbana.

"I'm so happy with the recognition. I did not expect it," Lumbana said.

That night, Lumbana was touched when the Chinese mother of the boy whom he had saved visited the restaurant. The visibly happy mother tightly shook his hands and thanked him for saving the life of her son.

The mother also informed him that her two sons were in good condition. He learned from her that her husband—a Japanese businessman—was off-island when the incident occurred. Before leaving the restaurant, she gave Lumbana a cash reward.

The cook recalled that in 1993 he also saved the life of a Japanese female diver who was stranded in the rough waters at Laulau Beach. His heroic deed was not reported in the media.

The first time he rescued a person from drowning was back in his native Quezon City, Philippines. He was in grade school at that time when one of his classmates nearly drowned in a swimming pool.

Taught to swim at the early age of eight, Lumbana dove to the rescue and pulled his classmate to safety.

Lumbana, however, is not one to be smug about his deeds. Asked whether he would do the same again if faced with a similar incident, the seaman-turned-cook immediately replied, "It's a duty. ...I am thinking, what if my kids will be in the same situation?"

When not rescuing drowning victims, Lumbana concentrates on his work and in taking care of his wife and three-year-old son, Li, and nine-month-old baby, Eli. This early, he has already begun teaching his boy to swim. And Li is certainly in good hands, having witnessed his father play hero once again.

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LABOR FRONT**Use of a Labor memorandum**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
REPORTER

Q: When can the Labor director or his designee issue a memorandum authorizing an alien worker to seek temporary employment?

A: The Labor director or his designee may issue such a memorandum upon a request by any federal enforcement agencies such as the National Labor Relations Board, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, and U.S. Department of Justice.

According to the Alien Labor Rules and Regulations, a memorandum may also be issued upon a request by any local enforcement agencies such as the Office of the Governor, the Attorney General's Office, Division of Immigration, and the Department of Public Safety.

Q: Can a memorandum be issued to a guest worker who is filing a private labor lawsuit?

A: A memorandum may be issued to an alien worker who is filing a private lawsuit involving labor claims upon presentation of a letter from the attorney of record. The attorney's record should identify the worker as a party in a pending lawsuit and name the court in which the case is pending and the case number.

Q: If a complaining worker was issued a memorandum and found a prospective employer, what would be the next proper step for him or her to take?

A: Upon finding an employer, the worker must present himself or herself to the Department of Labor for the issuance of a Temporary Work Authorization, or TWA. The TWA shall be valid for a period not to exceed 90 days. It shall be renewable every 90 days until the justification for the request has been accomplished.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 135. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the *Saipan Tribune's* office on the second floor of the CIC Centre on Beach Road, Garapan.

Filipino workers needed in Australia

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**
REPORTER

The Philippine Overseas Labor Office is encouraging prospective skilled Filipino workers in the CNMI and around the world to consider an opportunity to work in the land Down Under.

According to a Philippine Overseas Employment Agency OFW Advisory, Australia is looking for skilled Filipino workers who are fluent in English to be part of its Skilled Migration Program.

"Applicants should have professional or trade skills included in the Migration Occupations in Demand List and must be under 45 years old," said the advisory.

The Migration Occupations in Demand List include those occupations and specializations identified by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations as having an ongoing national shortage.

For professionals, the following are the available positions: Accountant, Anesthetist, Chemical Engineer, Civil Engineer, Computing Professional specializing in CISSP, Computing Professional specializing in E-commerce Security (non-programming), Computing Professional specializing in Network Security, Computing Professional specializing in SAP, Computing Professional specializing in



A worker uses a metal file to modify a corrugated pipe at the Beaconsfield Gold Mine at Beaconsfield, Australia. The country is looking for foreign workers to meet a domestic shortage. Among the workers needed are sheetmetal workers.

SIEBEL, Dental Specialist.

Dentist, Dermatologist, Emergency Medicine Specialist, General Medical Practitioner, Hospital Pharmacist, Medical Diagnostic Radiographer, Mining Engineer (excluding Petroleum), Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Obstetrician and Gynecologist, Occupational

Therapist, Ophthalmologist, Pediatrician, Pathologist, Petroleum Engineer, Physiotherapist, Podiatrist, Psychiatrist, Radiation Therapist, Radiologist, Registered Mental Health Nurse, Registered Midwife, Registered Nurse, Retail Pharmacist, Specialist Medical Practitioners (not elsewhere

classified), Specialist Physician, Speech Pathologist, Sonographer, and Surgeon.

For Associate Professionals, only Chefs, excluding Commis-sary Chefs, is on the list.

The Trades Persons list include: Automotive Electrician, Baker, Boat Builder and Repairer, Bricklayer, Cabinet-maker, Carpenter, Carpenter and Joiner, Cook, Drainer, Electrical Powerline Tradesperson, Electrician (Special Class), Electronic Equipment Tradesperson, Fibrous Plasterer, Fitter, Flat Glass Tradesperson, Floor Finisher, Furniture Upholsterer, Gasfitter, General Electrician, General Electronic Instrument-Tradesperson, General Plumber, Hairdresser, Joiner, Lift Mechanic, Mechanical Services and Air-conditioning Plumber, Metal Fabricator (Boiler-maker), Metal Machinist (First Class), Motor Mechanic, Panel Beater, Pastry Cook, Pressure Welder, Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Mechanic, Roof Plumber, Roof Slater and Tiler, Solid Plasterer, Sheetmetal Worker (First Class), Stonemason, Toolmaker, Vehicle Body Maker, Vehicle Painter, Wall and Floor Tiler, and Welder (First Class).

For more information visit www.poea.gov.ph or www.immi.gov.au/migration/skilled.

'Accountants Nite' tonight at Seaman's

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants is set to hold its Accountants Nite today, May 6, 5:30pm at the Seaman's Restaurant by the Port.

Those coming early to the event will have a chance to witness the beautiful Saipan sunset and for dinner, MIFICPA and Seaman's Restaurant will be serving a sumptuous buffet, along with other special fare.

The evening is meant to welcome new members and help them get acquainted with current MIFICPA members and friends.

The plans and new programs

of MIFICPA, like the U.S. CPA review and other new opportunities, will also be presented during the event.

Those planning to come are encouraged to bring along their own unique hat. A prize will be awarded to the one with the wackiest hat.

Seaman's Restaurant is spacious and allows a lot of room for fun-filled group activities. Accountants Nite will be a first-come, first-served event.

For more information, check the MIFICPA website www.mificpa.org or contact Lemuel Arabelo at 433-2766 or Cris Lubi at 234-8300. **(PR)**

UP alumni grand reunion today

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association-CNMI Chapter (UPAA) is reminding all the alumni of the University of the Philippines from all campuses in the Philippines of its grand reunion and election of officers this year.

UPAA-NMI Chapter president Janet Villagomez said the reunion-cum-election of officers would start at 5pm today at the Filipino Workers Resource Center, Philippine Overseas Labor Office and Overseas Work-

ers Welfare Administration area on the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe.

"All graduates and former students of the University of the Philippines, including current UPAA members, are encouraged to attend the potluck reunion," said Villagomez.

For more information, call UPAA president Janet Villagomez at 288-3937 or send a text message to UPAA secretary Aura Lou Sabangan at 286-2547. **(Marconi Calindas)**



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Ex-FBI analyst admits passing info to RP plotters

By **JEFFREY GOLD**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEWARK, New Jersey (AP)—A former FBI intelligence analyst pleaded guilty Thursday to passing classified information to plotters allegedly trying to overthrow Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

In a federal court hearing, the former analyst, Leandro Aragoncillo, outlined five years of efforts to pass top secret and secret information. He worked as a military aide to vice presidents Al Gore and Dick Cheney starting in 1999, and later became an FBI employee.

Aragoncillo, 47, did not identify by name the current and former Philippine officials to

whom he gave secrets, although he implicated former Philippine police official Michael Ray Aquino, who was arrested with him in September.

Aquino, a former deputy director of the Philippines National Police, is accused of passing information from Aragoncillo about Filipino leaders to current and former officials of that nation.

Federal prosecutors identified among the participants in the plot former Philippine President Joseph Estrada, opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former House of Representatives Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella, according to documents filed in U.S. District Court in Newark. The efforts appear related to efforts to unseat Arroyo, accord-

ing to FBI charges.

Estrada last week denied suggestions by U.S. prosecutors that he conspired with Aragoncillo to overthrow Arroyo.

Aragoncillo, a naturalized U.S. citizen who was born in the Philippines, pleaded guilty to a four-count indictment. The top charge, conspiracy to transmit national defense information, can carry the death penalty, but under the plea agreement, Aragoncillo faces 15 to 20 years in prison. Sentencing was scheduled for Aug. 14.

U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie said outside court that the government did not seek the death penalty because no physical harm resulted from the leaked information.

However, "it was information



Aragoncillo

that had the potential to compromise U.S. national security," Christie said.

Aragoncillo's public defender Chester M. Keller said outside court that his client never intended to harm the United States. "It was his sole intention

to help the people of the Philippines," said Keller, who added that his client did not receive any money for his efforts.

Aragoncillo worked at the White House from 1999 to 2001 and was assigned to the vice president's office. He became a civilian FBI employee in July 2004 at Fort Monmouth in central New Jersey. He was suspended by the FBI after his arrest in September.

According to the FBI complaint, he began sending classified information and documents in January. He was suspended by the FBI after his arrest.

Aquino lawyer Mark A. Berman has said Aquino "is not a supporter of the present president" and was friends with an

opposition Philippine senator identified as Lacson. The senator has said he received "shallow" information from Aquino and Aragoncillo.

Berman also has said that Aquino had known Aragoncillo for about a year at the time of their arrests and had received information from Aragoncillo, but that nothing was marked "classified."

In October, Aquino pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging conspiracy and acting as an unregistered foreign agent. At the time, Assistant U.S. Attorney Karl H. Buch said the government intended to bring additional charges against Aquino, a Philippine national who had been living in the New York City borough of Queens.

Estrada has a tomb ready, but does not plan to die yet

By **OLIVER TEVES**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Former President Joseph Estrada has been busy digging his own grave, quite literally.

The ousted Philippine leader said he has prepared a tomb for himself on his 15-hectare (37-acre) estate east of Manila where he is being held under house arrest while on trial on plunder charges, a capital offense.

"I want to see where I will be laid, my final resting place," he told a group of journalists he invited this week to his private residence in suburban San Juan for his mother's 101st birthday celebration.

The anti-graft court granted him a 12-hour pass to visit his home for the first time since he was arrested there five years ago.

Estrada rose to national fame as a popular action movie star who often portrayed underdog heroes. He later became mayor of his hometown, where he served 16 years. Then he was

elected senator, vice president and finally president in 1998 with the widest margin in Philippine history.

However, his tenure as president was cut short when he was forced to step down in a military-backed "people power" revolt in January 2001 over alleged corruption. He was arrested three months later. His vice president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, took over to finish his term, and then



Estrada

was elected president in fraud-tainted polls in 2004. While awaiting the conclusion of his 5-year-old trial, Estrada keeps himself busy on his estate running a farm with 300 chickens and 200 hogs.

He said he has distributed pigs to poor residents around his estate under a program in which the beneficiaries return three piglets to him for every 10 that are born from the pigs they receive.

He is also building a museum that will showcase his life as a "superstar, mayor, senator, president and prisoner," he said.



Filipino mothers carry their babies as they join a simultaneous breastfeeding record at a Manila gymnasium on Thursday May 4, 2006.

RP mothers set world record for breast-feeding

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Nearly 4,000 mothers in the Philippine capital reportedly set a new world record on Thursday for the largest number of women simultaneously breast-feeding their babies in the same place, organizers said.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, whose city is one of the event's organizers, said 3,738 mothers simultaneously breast-fed their ba-

bies for at least one minute, breaking the Guinness World Record.

The result will be submitted to Guinness for evaluation.

The United Nations Children's Fund said the previous record was held by the City of Berkeley, California, where 1,135 mothers simultaneous breast-fed babies for a minute on Aug. 3, 2002.

The event was also held to raise

awareness about the benefits of breast-feeding, organizers said.

"What we're planning to do is incite awareness to put back the pride in breast-feeding and the respect we deserve because we commit ourselves to our children," said Dr. Elvira Esguerra, director of the advocacy group, Children for Breast-feeding.

UNICEF representative to the Philippines Dr. Nicholas Alipui

said breast-feeding can help curb malnutrition in children under two years old, provide children with antibodies to fight diseases, and boost the country's economy because families save on infant formula.

"Breast-fed infants definitely have the best start in life," he said in a statement. "Human breastmilk has all the nutrients that a newborn infant needs."

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

GMA orders probe on killings of 4 fishermen

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on Wednesday ordered the military to investigate the killings of four fishermen, believed to be Chinese men, near the South China Sea's disputed Spratly Islands. The four Chinese fishermen were shot and killed while three others were wounded while fishing near the Spratlys on April 27. The victims were from the Chinese island province of Hainan and the nationality of the attackers is unknown, the official Xinhua News Agency reported

on Tuesday. All the equipment on the Chinese fishermen's boat, including radios and navigation apparatus, were taken. An investigation was underway, according to Xinhua. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Arroyo wanted an investigation report on the killings as soon as possible, adding the Chinese and Philippine governments were still trying to verify the nationality of the victims.

Suspected rebels shoot dead police officer, companion

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Suspected communist guerrillas fatally shot a police officer and his companion in a public market in a far-flung town southeast of Manila in the latest of a new

wave of attacks that has alarmed authorities, police said Thursday. Two New People Army guerrillas shot police officer Virgilio Razo and his civilian companion several times. They later died en route to a hospital in the port town of Buluan in Sorsogon province Wednesday, regional police commander Chief Superintendent Victor Boco Jr. said. A spike in communist guerrilla attacks on police targets has forced the 115,000-strong police to seek the right to battle insurgents independent of the military, officials said.

US Senate raps Arroyo over media murders

WASHINGTON—The US Senate, in an in-

quiry into reported murders of media people in the Philippines since 2000, urged President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration on Wednesday to swiftly bring to justice the attackers of journalists in the country. "Ensuring that legal officials thoroughly investigate and prosecute attacks on journalists is critical as the world recognizes Press Freedom Day today," said Senator Richard Lugar, the Republican chair of the Senate foreign relations committee, which held the inquiry. World Press Freedom Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly and is observed annually on May 3. This year's theme is "Media and Good Governance."

PINOYSTYLE

PBB update: Loneliness, alienation did it

By **NINI VALERA**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Loneliness and alienation were the two most compelling reasons that Aldred Gatchalian decided to take a voluntary leave from "Pinoy Big Brother Teen Edition" on Saturday.

It was exactly a week after he entered "Kuya's" house with 11 other participants.

A new housemate, Joaquin Bustamante Mendoza, 17, replaced Aldred on Monday.

Aldred's mother, Marian,

was waiting outside when he came out. Teary-eyed, Marian embraced Aldred and said she was very proud of him.

The crowd that had gathered in front of the house cheered the teen.

Aldred finished high school with honors from St. Therese de Avila School in Parañaque only last March. Coming from a poor family, he earlier confessed that he could not relate to the more "sosyal" housemates.

"PBB" had not allowed exit interviews for Aldred.

Director Lauren Dyogi explained that the show's resident psychologist, Dr. Randy Dellosa, had advised against public appearances for the teen.

In one episode, Aldred told Big Brother that he had been offended during the "Unguy-Unguyan" card game, where one of the housemates referred to him as "masamang itsura sa boys (the worst-look-

ing among the boys)."

Actually, Big Brother explained to Aldred, what Kim said was "masamang itsura kasi hindi ngumingiti (he looks bad because he doesn't smile)."

Dyogi told Inquirer Entertainment that Aldred had often asked to talk to his mother.

"But [that] was against the rules," Dyogi said. "I guess he must have felt really lonely."



First of a series of 'Idol' auditions set June 3

By **MARINEL R. CRUZ**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

"Philippine Idol" hopefuls had better be ready with audition pieces on June 3.

This is according to ABC 5, which announced on Tuesday that the first of three Manila auditions is set on June 3. The network has acquired the franchise for the phenomenally popular reality talent search from FremantleMedia.

The venue will be announced later.

Tryouts for the Visayas and Mindanao regions will be in Cebu and Davao, respectively, said Terra Daffon, ABC 5 senior vice president for corporate affairs.



Ryan Agoncillo

Checklist

Fast-track auditions will be held at satellite offices in SM Malls in key cities.

According to a checklist that ABC 5 sent to Inquirer Entertainment, contestants should be

at least 16 but not more than 28 years old on the day of the audition.

He or she must be a Filipino citizen or a bearer of dual citizenship, one of which is Filipino.

In case a contestant has dual citizenship, he/she must present the original and two certified true copies of his/her Philippine passport.

He/she should be prepared to sing two songs from the official song list found on the "Philippine Idol" website. (www.philippineidol.com)

On audition day, a contestant must submit a completed "Philippine Idol" application form and two photos (one full-body shot or at least 3R-sized, and one close-up or at least passport size).

If a contestant is under 18, a parent or legal guardian must sign the application form.

The contestant should submit the original and two certified true copies of birth certificates and two kinds of IDs (i. e., passport, driver's license, SSS/GSIS, school or company ID).

Judges, hosts

A press conference to officially introduce the RP "Idol" judges and hosts is set on May 24, Daffon said.

Maestro Ryan Cayabyab is the first judge to be confirmed. A namesake, Ryan Agoncillo, is one of two hosts.

"During the presscon, we will choose from among the members of the entertainment media our 'Press Idol,'" said Daffon.

Sarah Geronimo overworked?

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A day before the launch of the new sineserye (movie-based soap opera) "Bituing Walang Ningning," teen singing champ Sarah Geronimo checked herself into a hospital.

It was right after "ASAP," the Sunday noontime variety show of ABS-CBN, where she's one of the featured performers, Sarah recalled.

And then, the following day, she was back onstage, belting it out with "Bituin" co-stars Zsazsa Padilla and Angelika de la Cruz—at the Music Museum.

Right after the launch program, Sarah took a French leave because she "had to go back to the hospital."

Inquirer Entertainment caught up with her backstage.

She admitted that she had been on needles and pins lately. "Kinakabahan at kinikilabutan [nervous and afraid]" was how Sarah described the way she felt. "I'm so happy that they trusted me enough to portray a role (Dorina) previously played by the Megastar (Sharon Cuneta). [But] it's overwhelming."

Overwhelmed, overjoyed... is Sarah also overworked?

"Not really," she said. "I just need to take it easy. I had [sore] throat. I have to take care of my voice. Ito ang puhunan ko (This is my asset)."

Asked exactly how she was feeling, she said: "I just need to rest my voice because it's been overused—all the tapings, con-

certs, promotions for the soap, recording of the soap's soundtrack. I just came home from shows in Canada, where it was very cold."

Does she ask her mom permission to miss work now and then?

"Sometimes," she admitted. "I tell her when I'm too tired. But I've come to accept that, being an actress-singer, it's my responsibility to show up and honor all my commitments."

She said she related well with the opening stanza of the song "Bituing Walang Ningning." (The sineserye premieres May 15.)

"It says that even if you've achieved your dreams, you still long for something," she said. "Meron pa ring konting lumbay. (There's still a certain sadness.)"

It's probably the inevitable sacrifices she has had to make for fame and fortune. "I've been so busy, I've had to give up truly important things, like time with my family. When I get home, my siblings are asleep. I can't even hug them or talk to them as often as I used to."

Not that she's not grateful to the biz.

"I'm thankful because I've fulfilled my dreams," she said.

But it's a tough balancing act, she acknowledged. "I also have my studies to take care of. It's important to me that I finish school. I'm a high school senior under the home study [program] of the Angelicum



Sarah Geronimo

College."

She intends to take up a music-related course in college.

Her calendar is so crammed, it looks like she will be celebrating her debut on the soap. (Yes, it will be incorporated in the show, according to the soap's directors Jerome Chavez Pobocan and Erick C. Salud.)

Sarah turns 18 on July 25.

Maybe a vacation would be the best gift for the hardworking champ? *(With a report from Valerie Cruz)*

Meet the other 'Big Brother'



Dr. Randy Dellosa

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

When the teen edition of ABS-CBN's "Pinoy Big Brother" series was first announced, parents and other media critics were quick to express concern.

Are teenagers equipped to handle the pressures of isolation in the now famous house on Mother Ignacia Avenue?

Dr. Randy Dellosa, "PBB" resident psychologist, tackled this, and more, with Inquirer Entertainment.

"Teens are intense and impulsive. They may not always know how to control this. They may also go overboard in testing the limits. A possible outcome are love affairs that may not end well," Dellosa said.

Another vital issue is sexuality, he pointed out. "Teenagers with raging hormones may find a need to release this."

But he is not that worried about the housemates, Dellosa said. "I'm more concerned about the teen viewers. They look up to the housemates as role models. What if the housemates commit mistakes? We can't really prevent exploratory behavior, but [since it's on TV], teen viewers might think it's acceptable."

He said the housemates are well-protected. "Big Brother and the whole staff are watching. I am on call 24-7."

After his first "counseling session" with them just hours before this interview, he offered this observation: "Individually and as a group, they are keen on exploring, but they are also very cautious. They are aware that negative behavior would merit some form of consequence from Big Brother and the voting public."

The teen housemates seemed to have learned from the experiences of the show's two previous editions, the counselor said. "Some have picked up strategies—what to do and what not to. There's a greater fear of [censure]."

There's "balance" in the house right now, he said: "Big Brother picks personalities that are solid and unique. With this current batch, the boys are more easygoing and relaxed—boy-next-door types. The girls are more conflicted in their life stories, more emotionally complicated."

One, Jamilla Obispo, is an unwed mother, who once worked as a model and GRO in a bar.

"Niña Jose has a history of anorexia nervosa," Dellosa added. "That's a body image and self-esteem problem. Mikki Arceo has a compulsion to stand out in a crowd. But that's a reaction to people who try to box her in."

The biggest stunner was when high school valedictorian Aldred Gatchalian chose voluntary eviction after only seven days in the house.

Aldred had consulted both Big Brother and Dellosa before he left. "We wanted him to stay, but he had already decided," the counselor said.

(Dellosa is available for counseling Tuesday mornings. But for Aldred, Dellosa had to make special house calls.)

Aldred had an "adjustment" problem, he said, which happens "when a person, faced with a stressor, does not have the coping mechanisms to deal with it."

IQ is not EQ

Among Aldred's stressors was homesickness. "He missed his mother. When a person feels isolated in a group, insecurities and issues emerge."

Dellosa opined that if there's one lesson from Aldred's experience, it's that "IQ doesn't necessarily mean EQ or Social Quotient. You may be smart, but dealing with other people and dealing with your own emotions are another matter altogether. His stay in the house would hopefully teach him to develop emotional and relational skills."

Dellosa said Aldred is now doing well and will be ready to face the public in a few days.

"All he does now is sleep," Dellosa quipped.

Hot and happening at 42

By **DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Zsa Zsa Padilla, who turns 42 this month, joins the Hollywood trend of being hot and happening, as 40 indeed becomes the new 30. Doesn't she kinda remind you of Uma Thurman?

For Zsa Zsa, it all boils down to healthy eating habits, regular exercise and of course Dr. Vicki Belo's "Midas touch." Thanks to mesotherapy to eliminate stubborn fat she could not exercise away, and Fraxel and Thermage to tighten her abdominal skin and improve stretch marks, Zsa Zsa flaunts a physique unmarred by age.

Has your youthful body enhanced intimate moments?

Yes would be an understatement! I

have become more comfy with myself. I hope women who are pushing 40 out there will snap out of the mindset na pag 40 ka na it's mid-life crisis time.

What was [Dolphy's] reaction to your sizzling billboard on Edsa?

He's used to me changing my look every so often. Walang bawal. He's so cool. Once I came home with a different hair color, he just said, "Akala ko may foreigner tayong guest!"

Don't you think you're sexier than your daughter Karylle?

Karylle has her own charm. All women go through certain phases in their lives before they can exude a certain mystique. Wait till Karylle reaches her prime!

What's the secret of your staying power?

Not all singers are given a chance to act. I'm lucky I was able to cross over. I was sort of prepared for acting. But I will always go back to singing.

Will your new body fit into a bridal gown?

Abangan!

Sad for Liezl

I am sad that Tita Nena (Amalia Fuentes) is on the warpath again versus Albert and Liezl Martinez. She says that the couple should stop making it appear that she gave them a hard time when they were starting in the US.

I was a bridesmaid at the Martinezes' wedding and ninang to their eldest, Aly-anna. From Day 1 when they eloped, I

was privy to their melodramatic love story. It's really one for the books!

Tita Nena was one of my mom's closest friends. She even told my mom once that she wants me to write her biography. I kidded her and said, "Ok as long as you pay me per word."

In many ways, Tita Nena reminds me of my mom. Both of them seem intimidating but they soften up when hit in the right spot. Mothers don't want just to be heard but to be really listened to. Now that my mom's gone, I miss her sermons in a way I never thought I would. Maybe when the mom in Tita Nena and Liezl prevail, they will understand each other a little more.

I texted Albert for his reaction to Tita Nena's explosive statements. His text-back: "We decided to just let it pass. No need to clear our name. It's been going



Zsa Zsa Padilla, who turns 42 this month, joins the Hollywood trend of being hot and happening.

on since time immemorial. We don't want to talk about it anymore not only for us but more for our kids. It doesn't matter what people think. What matters is God knows the truth."

ABS-CBN vs GMA 7: News war heats up

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

"TV Patrol World" is back on track, having recovered from a two-year slump, according to ABS-CBN news executives Maria Ressa, senior vice president and head of News and Current Affairs, and Luchi Cruz-Valdes, vice president and head of Current Affairs.

ABS-CBN's primetime news show has been posting good ratings over rival GMA 7's "24 Oras," said Valdes, who was vacationing in Bangkok at the time of the phone interview with Inquirer Entertainment. "In the past three weeks, we've been posting higher ratings in three out of five days in Metro Manila," she stressed.

She cited surveys conducted by AGB-Nielsen, measured in three areas—Metro Manila,

Mega Manila and Suburbs. Mega Manila consists of respondents in Metro Manila (70 percent) and the Suburbs (30 percent).

Valdes recounted: "The decline in 'TV Patrol' ratings started in 2004. All throughout 2005, the best we could get was a parity—meaning, we would be behind by one point. June last year, things started to pick up."

GMA 7 protests

That was the time that Ressa took over as head of the news team, Valdes noted. "In a month, we'd win once in Metro. Then, twice in a month. Later, twice in a week. Now, we win thrice in a week in Metro. If you get the average, we're no. 1 in Metro."

Ressa recalled that in the last quarter of 2005, "'TV Patrol' was doing well... and then Ultra happened."

She was referring to the stampede that killed 71 audience members of the ABS-CBN noontime show "Wowowee," which was celebrating its first anniversary at the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) last Feb. 4.

Two months after the tragedy, "'TV Patrol' was back on track," said Ressa.

Butch Raquel, head of GMA 7's Corporate Communications, disputed this. Via SMS, he sent Inquirer "figures that [show] we are leading... for the period cited."

The message read that from April 1-26, from 6 a.m. to 12 midnight, GMA was leading over ABS CBN—in Mega Manila with 17.2 percent vs 12.2 percent; in Metro Manila with 15.8 percent vs 13.5 percent; and in the Suburbs with 19.9 percent vs 9.8 percent.

Same source

Raquel stressed that these figures were also from AGB-Nielsen.

Ressa in turn e-mailed figures that showed "TV Patrol" besting "24 Oras" in Metro on at least three nights in April (19-21).

Ressa cautioned that ratings are "simply a tool that tells us what viewers want."

"My personal preference is not to focus on these figures," she said. "If we keep doing the right thing, the ratings will follow. While we're... winning in Metro, we still have a long way to go in Mega Manila."

In a nutshell, she observed that viewers want "news that is relevant to their lives... In the West, news viewership has gone down; but in the Philippines, it has gone up. We're bucking global trends."

Ate Vi's advice

By **NINI VALERA**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Young stars should take care of their finances and pay their taxes.

This advice came from Vilma Santos, whose assets were frozen by the Bureau of Internal Revenue in the '80s for non-payment of income tax.

"It hasn't happened again since," Vilma told Inquirer Entertainment last week. "But I know what [other stars] are going through right now—it's not easy. When you're young, somebody else handles your money. When you start having problems, then you start wondering what happened to your earnings."

She considers herself lucky to have recovered from the brush with the BIR even if her marriage to Edu Manzano suffered from it.

"Edu wanted me to be Mrs. Manzano, to lie low from show biz. But I had to work and pay my debts. I survived and recovered. Not everybody is as lucky."

Surprised

Vilma was surprised to learn that Luis, her son by Edu, paid a bigger income tax than she did this year.

"For the first time in my life, I felt insecure," Vilma said, laughing. "Luis was earning more—I told myself, this couldn't happen. But it's happening."

She described Luis as a good person who wants to enjoy life. "[And] the girls! I know my son, he's definitely no longer a virgin. But I still don't want him to get married and make me a grandmother," Vilma admitted. "He just turned 25!"

Direk Vi?

The actress, who's making a TV comeback tonight on a special two-part episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya"—now celebrating its 15th anniversary—observed that today's young stars are all talented.

"And beautiful," she gushed. "They can dance, sing, they can do anything.



Vilma Santos shows off the 2005 U.P. Gawad Plaridel award that she got on July 4, 2005, from the U.P. Film Institute in U.P. Diliman.

But the problem there is, it's hard to stand out. During my time, it was a one-on-one with Nora (Aunor) and me."

What more does she want to achieve?

"I'd like to direct, like Laurice Guillen or Marilou Diaz-Abaya," she declared. Other than this, she's content.

For her "MMK" stint, Vilma said she found the perfect story. "They have been asking me to do an episode for the longest time, but we couldn't agree on the script. I found this story of

Daisy Hernandez touching.

Tonight's story revolves around Daisy's relationship with her special child April, who died about two years ago. "I met April before she died," said Vilma. "I would attend activities at the special school in Lipa that she attended."

Vilma was not in the country when April died. "I learned only when Daisy delivered a speech about starting a foundation named after April. She talked about her loss [but] I saw only her strength."

Cheryl whacked partner Drew during tilt finals

By **MARINEL R. CRUZ**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Filipino-American Cheryl Burke emerged as grand champ—with partner 98 Degrees' Drew Lachey—in the last season of ABC's "Dancing with the Star," but not before "one really embarrassing" moment.

"I whacked Drew in the nose and made him bleed," Cheryl said during her first meeting with the members of the local entertainment press on Tuesday. "I was making this turn and my elbow ran right into his nose."

Obviously, Drew recovered, and they danced on to snatch the coveted trophy.

Cheryl said she had somewhat expected "something bad to happen that day."

"It had been a hard day. We were all tired," Cheryl pointed out.

According to the dancer-choreographer, she met Drew on the very day she signed on for "DWTS." She explained: "They don't tell you who you're dancing with."

They were both very nervous at the start, Cheryl said. "Later, I came to him as a down-to-earth person—he didn't seem like a celebrity at all. We communicated really well. He's hardworking and always determined to do a good job; it's easy for me to teach someone like that."

The New York-based dancing champ and her mom, Sherrie Bautista-Burke are in town for a weeklong visit. On her birthday (May 2), Cheryl paid a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang.

Did you know that you're big news here?

No. But I'm sure I wouldn't have won if not for all the support that I got from Filipinos.

How have you been since your victory?

Drew and I visited a lot of shows. We have been on the "Elen Degeneres" show. That was a nice experience. We also did "The View" in New York, "The Tony Danza Show" and "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" To this day, I have so many celebrities, like Samuel L. Jackson, coming up to me saying, "Wow! I enjoyed the show." Teri Hatcher from "Desperate Housewives" said she watched, too.

How easy was it to teach Drew?

Drew is a quick learner. He put a lot of time into it. He never complained. He wanted to win. I hope to have a partner like him again next season.

Do you see yourself crossing over to acting?

I definitely plan on capitalizing on what I'm good at. But it wouldn't hurt to take acting lessons on the side. You'll never know. One day maybe I could dance and act in a show or a movie where I could dance but need to act as well.

Have you tried auditioning on Broadway?

Not yet. We'll see in the future. I definitely want to keep doing "Dancing with the Stars" and see where that takes me. I'm taking it slow, I want to make the right decisions.

OPINYON

Rebuffed again

In a span of two weeks, the Supreme Court has handed down a series of decisions that struck a ringing blow for political liberties and against a threatening authoritarianism.

The Court sharply rebuked President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration with a train of three decisions that sought to curb abuse of executive power as it declared as illegal, in a May 3 decision, a clause in Presidential Proclamation 1017 (which declared a national emergency on Feb. 24) giving her authority to issue decrees.

For the first time since it slammed the brakes on the administration's seemingly irresistible lurch toward authoritarian rule, the Court did not mince words in warning the nation that the administration was retracing the introduction of the Marcos dictatorship when the President issued the enabling clause of PP 1017 empowering her "To enforce obedience to all the laws and decrees, orders and regulations promulgated by me personally or upon my direction."

The Court cited the similarity between the wordings of PP 1017 and President Ferdinand Marcos' Proclamation 1081 declaring martial law in 1972. The clause, which allowed warrant-less arrests, prompted Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban to say, "They (the administration) are playing with fire and, unless prudently restrained, they may one day wittingly or unwittingly burn down the house."

This latest rebuff by the Court of the administration followed a decision that rolled back portions of Ms Arroyo's Executive Order 464, which banned executive department officials from testifying at congressional inquiries without her permission, and another decision that voided the administration's calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy.

The decision on PP 1017 and that on the CPR represent an emphatic blow for individual liberties

and reflect the Court's heightening concern over the apparently authoritarian tendencies of the administration. In these decisions, the Court clearly moved beyond issues involving the maintenance of the delicate balance of power between the executive and legislative departments within the system of checks and balances.

The issue on EO 464 involved separation of powers. The Court's decision upheld the legislative right to compel executive department officials to testify at its inquiries "in aid of legislation," and it also associated such appearances in Congress with the enhancement of the public's "right to know" (through information revealed in the hearings) and "the right to participate" in democratic governance.

However, the decisions on PP 1017 and on CPR directly defended the individual citizen's liberties from abuse in the exercise of State powers by a repressive regime in the course of its struggle for political survival, which has been justified as the "right of the State to defend itself."

This is what makes the decisions more important to the citizens than the decision on EO 464, which is directly relevant to the members of the legislature. The two decisions define their thrust as differentiated from the thrust of the decision on EO 464. Citizens are defenseless against arbitrary and warrant-less arrests, while members of Congress have stronger defenses provided by parliamentary immunities.

The direct application of the decision on PP 1017 in protecting the political rights of as-



Analysis

By **AMANDO DORONILA**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

sembly and freedom of the press was explicitly stated when the Court held that PP 1017 did not justify the imposition of warrant-less arrests, the raid on the office of the Daily Tribune and prior restraint on the press. The Court could not have been more emphatic when it ruled that: "The warrant-less arrests of Randolph David and Ronald Llamas; the dispersal and warrant-less arrests of the KMU and Naflu-KMU members during the rallies, in the absence of proof that they were committing acts constituting lawless violence ... the imposition of standards on media or any form or prior restraint on the press, as well as the warrant-less search of the Tribune offices and the seizure of its articles for publication and

The Court's decisions assume further significance in the context of the administration coming under increasing international criticism over what is perceived to be its authoritarian tendencies. They give authoritative weight to, for example, a recent editorial of the New York Times, which said, in part:

"Earlier this year (President Arroyo) briefly declared a state of emergency in response to allegations of a coup threat that others disputed. Since then she has been intensifying pressure on a wide range of political critics and especially on the press. Government officials have warned news outlets that they will be held to restrictive new guidelines, the justice secretary talks darkly about a journalistic watch list... No government has made such efforts to muzzle

The decision on PP 1017 and that on the CPR represent an emphatic blow for individual liberties and reflect the Court's heightening concern over the apparently authoritarian tendencies of the administration.

other materials, are declared unconstitutional."

While the decision offered the President some consolation by saying that declaring a state of national emergency was constitutional, it held that "such declaration does not authorize the President to take over privately owned utilities or business affected with public interests without prior legislation." It also said that PP 1017 "is unconstitutional insofar as it grants President Arroyo the authority to promulgate decrees."

the press since the Marcos era.

"President Bush has repeatedly hailed Mrs. Arroyo as an important ally against international terrorism. He now needs to warn her that by undermining a hard-won democracy, she is making her country far more than vulnerable to terrorist pressures."

Still, the defense of democracy is mainly the responsibility of the Filipinos and their independent institutions.

What's in it for you

In the end, every political decision begins with, "What's in it for me?" That is why patronage is usually the lifeblood of politics.

So, granting someone does not care about right or wrong—and resents discussions of right and wrong as an irritating pastime of the "holier than thou" rabble; and that one does not want to talk about personalities either, because to focus on the personal is to reveal completely the undesirability of a leader in question; and, for the sake of argument, that to take sides—which is inevitable in everything, from sports to board decisions, not to mention politics—is undesirable because of some mythical need for "objectivity"; and, just for the hell of it, that if you yell something often enough, it becomes the truth—assuming all these things, will someone please explain how on earth Charter change, as defined by the administration, can make life better? And for whom?

Tell me how it will increase my salary, lower my taxes, decrease the price of gas and goods, stop inflation, ensure fewer potholes on the roads, improve health care services and provide for cheaper and more efficient telecoms, a more dynamic and responsive bureaucracy, better and

more affordable education, better sanitation, and genuine peace and order?

How can giving the current leadership—or any leadership, for that matter, not to mention a leadership hounded by questions of legitimacy—a blank check, politically, improve our lives? Will it repeal the law of supply and demand? (Remember that old political joke?) How can Charter change help?

Tell me, with the same crew at the helm for five years now; with overseas Filipino workers just beginning to express themselves at the ballot box but,

bailiwicks, how will Charter change improve anything politically?

I don't see how. Not under the scheme being peddled at present. When the Senate, about a decade ago, was poised to pass an anti-dynasty bill, the House advised the former to forget it because it would never, ever, even be calendared for deliberation in the House.

(The bill provided that a congressman or mayor or governor can't be replaced by a wife or a child; a president cannot have any relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity in political office for the duration of his or her term; and members of the same family cannot compete for the same office, except a Senate seat, which is contested on a national scale and thus relatively immune to the lock dynasties have on local politics; or local council seats, which are so plentiful it's also difficult to see them

instead of being sent to the national government, because it would lessen the influence congressmen have over their rivals—the mayors. Had it been enacted into law, the bill would have been a meaningful step toward freeing the provinces from national control. And yet, today, there are those who would not only abolish the Senate, but go on to merge the executive with the legislative branches.

If the alternative that is being proposed is along the lines of replacing Jojo Binay with Lito Lapid, come on! Let's grant that there are those who dislike Binay, but is Lapid any kind of solution? And what does it say about those who view Lapid as a solution? And you trust them with the economy while they place the country's business center under Lapid? What happened to all that talk about opposing the so-called politics of popularity?

I'll tell you what the pro-Charter change arguments boil down to: If you eliminate all checks and balances, if you remove all controls preventing a one-party state and a president-for-life (or prime minister-for-life), if you remove the legal limitations on the exercise of presidential will and whim; in other words, if you absolutely trust not only the President (who, after all, won't live forever), but more importantly, the majority coalition tolerating her leader-



The Long View

By **MANUEL L. QUEZON III**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ship for the moment, then you should be for constitutional change.

After all, the only assurance you have is not on paper or in the system. The only assurance you can have depends on a single assumption: that given absolute, unlimited, unquestionable power, a

coalition, any coalition, can be trusted—and expected to use its power only for the public good, never for its own, selfish interests, and surely not for the benefit of its political allies. In other words, all you have is faith.

Faith in whom? Don't think in terms of the administration coalition. Think of any coalition. Because democracy is not about a particular group holding power forever. It is also about the probability that one day, today's minority could be tomorrow's majority. Either side can't be given what those in power today wants. Because no one, no group, should have such complete, unquestionable, power. To surrender that power to one individual or group is madness and reflects a lunatic attitude toward governance.

Would you hand anyone, in the administration or the opposition, today's leaders and, perhaps, tomorrow's leaders, too, a blank check?

Comments welcome at <http://www.quezon.ph/blog>

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soon enough, to be deprived of that hard-won, partial (at present) right by a system of government that would (assuming you are anti-Joseph Estrada) turn the country into a nation composed of San Juan-style

as dynastic preserves.)

Consider, too, that the House also objected to the Senate proposal to legislate that 60 percent of local income from taxes remain with the local governments

SAMU'T SARI

Keynotes students shine in recital



Krystele Anne Chavez tickles the ivory keys with the song "Spanish Cabellero."



Selected voice students perform a group song called "Happy."

The Keynotes School of Music held a recital for its student on April 2, 2006 at Charley's Cabaret of the Pacific Islands Club. The event was well-attended by parents, friends, and supporters and the students' performances were well-applauded. Here are some pictures take of the event:



Brennt Makana Salas performs "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" on the electronic organ.



Carmen Suzanne Borja plays "The Entertainer" on the electronic organ.



Agatha Cyril Marasigan and William Sherwin Cañedo perform a violin duet: called "Andantino."



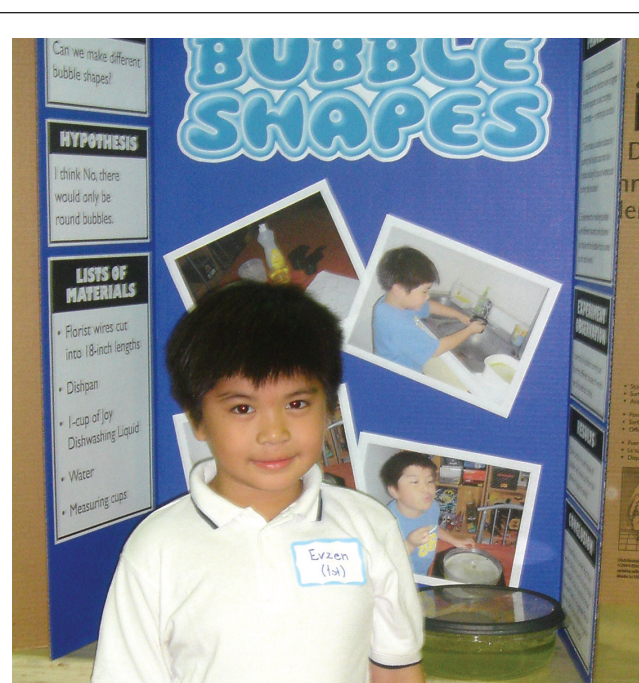
Lakshmi Marie Borja sings "Forever's Not Enough."



John Cano performs a percussive arrangement for the song "Give Me Some Fill."



Mary Antoinette Alovera belts out her own version of the song "Don't Cry Out Loud."



SCIENCE FAIR

Evzen S. Pabellon, a first grade student from Whispering Palms School, is one of the participants in the 3-Schools Science Fair held at the Ada Gym on May 4. The 3-Schools Science Fair was composed of the Whispering Palms School, Saipan International School and Seventh Day Adventist School.



WHIZ KIDS

Whispering Palms School students pose for a souvenir shot after participating in the 3-Schools Science Fair held at the Ada Gym on May 4.